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Grounded in *Kapwa*: How PACE came to be

Providing visibility, service, and community growth for the Filipino American community in the Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex.

Photo Credit: Pilipino American Community Endeavor (Instagram)
Members of PACE gathered for a social meeting in early 2024

By André Averion, Newsletter Editor

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Committed to uniting the DFW Filipino American community, The Pilipino American Community Endeavor has spearheaded initiatives such as Lone Star Palengke since fall 2022, with their origins tracing back to earlier in the same year at a small boba tea shop.

In spring 2022, PACE co-founders and couple Conrado and Abby Casallo moved to Dallas from Seattle, shocked to learn there was no active community center, only a handful of restaurants, and hardly any stores. Wanting to reach out to other like-minded individuals, they eventually sat down in a cafe with co-founders Mark Sampelo and Elna Mallari. Small talk became ideas, ideas became dreams, and dreams became action. It was decided they would unite the community and establish a sustainable Filipino community center with room for a Filipinotown to prosper. To start the movement, they began reaching out to other Filipino Americans for what would, eventually, become the largest Filipino festival in North Texas - Lone Star Palengke.

Only a few hundred were expected to attend the first year of the festival, instead on Oct. 23, 2022, over 120 vendors and performers from the community gathered to serve over 7,000 people at Red Tail Pavilion in Plano, TX; many meeting and networking for the very first time. It was an overwhelming success that garnered local press coverage, which eventually lead the startup festival group to officially become a nonprofit organization in April, 2023.

From the success of the first year alone, PACE began reaching out to further support the community by creating spaces for growth and networking. Annual DFW Community Town Hall were held to discuss the issues of greatest priority and concern in the community. Voter Registration Drives were held in collaboration with local organizations, schools, and community leaders to encourage and provide education for people to register to vote. PACE's efforts weren't just limited to hosting their own events. PACE began going out to support other Filipino and AAPI organizations, and regularly promotes events within the community.

By fall 2023, Lone Star Palangke returned as an annual event, which had over 10,000 visitors visit the Red Tail Pavilion. Previous programs returned for the following year, along with new programs like the PACE Bayanihan newsletter, the Bayanihan Press and events like Let's Get Social, which focuses on professional business developing and networking. On Oct. 12, 2024, Lone Star Palangke and the Kapwa Concert will be hosted in Asia Time Square in Grand Prairie, TX, which is expected to be an even larger event than previous years.

At its core, PACE was founded with *Kapwa* - unity of self with others, shared identity/self, in mind. The dream, that started at a small boba tea shop, of empowering the local community is still thriving today, to one day provide a Filipino Community Center surrounded by thriving Filipino businesses. Dozens at PACE are working to make that dream a reality, and with support from the community, that dream may not be so far away.